/27 cont'd/

here.) However, their fishing methods and the scale of the fishing are not as extensive as those of the Li. Other than when they occasionally join the Li in large-scale fishing, they usually fish individually or in a small group. In any case, fishing plays no important role in their economic life.

6. Handicrafts

Bamboo is common in the Miao area, and there is a well-developed industry in bamboo. Among their products are baskets, boxes, winnowing baskets, strainers, etc. Aside from those for domestic use, the surplus products are exchanged with the Li for rice and grain to meet food shortages. The men are skilled in making wooden furniture. Tables, stools, mortars, troughs, etc., are all homemade. They can build a house within a short time with purlins and rafters made by themselves. Needless to say, these houses are very primitive.

The Miao women are good weavers. I regret that I have not personally examined their weaving. In particular, the Miao women are experts in dyeing. There is a species of plant in the Miao area /28/ which produces blue juice. The women pick the leaves from the plant and soak them in a large water jar. The dyeing process consists of daubing white cotton cloth with wax and thus drawing and painting on it various kinds of designs as the dyer pleases. The cloth is then soaked in the jar of blue indigo. After a short time, the cloth is taken out, and the wax is cleaned off, leaving the design on the blue cloth. This method of dyeing is called the "wax method." Ryûzô Torii* also observed this method of dyeing among

/* Professor Ryûzô Torii (1870-1953) was a well-known Japanese anthropologist.—Tr./

the Miao in Kweichou province and has described it in great detail. He is quoted as follows: "First, they set out the cloth in a certain place, wax is then melted a little, and on the cloth designs are painted with the melted wax at the dyer's pleasure. After the

/28 cont'd/

396 designs are completed the cloth is dyed. This is a very difficult
286 craft; if it is not skillfully done, the wax design may be broken. Thus skill and concentration are the two requirements of this craft. After the dyeing is completed, they wash the cloth with clean water, and after this set it out in a sun-drenched open area to dry, in order to remove the wax. When the wax is completely cleaned away, the process is completed." (See the Chinese translation of Miao Tsu Tiao-ch'a Pao-kao /Report on an Investigation of the Miao People/, p. 267.)

285 Miao women still use bags made of hemp fiber. When they
482 go out, they carry them on their backs; all their miscellaneous
415 possessions are packed in them. They resemble the Cantonese women who carry babies on their backs.

7. Trade

437 Because their productivity is slight and their products are very
438 similar, there is almost no trade, not even barter, among the Miao themselves. Though they carry on some trade with the Li, their
439 commercial relations have not gone beyond the barter stage, such as the exchange of bamboo products for rice mentioned above. Truly complex trade is only carried on with the Chinese, and it is only a start. This is of several types. First, there are the Chinese peddlers who bring goods to sell in the Miao villages and, at the same time, buy the local products from the Miao. Second, the
[443] Miao occasionally /29/ go to the Li markets to do business with the Chinese merchants. In the capital of Pao-t'ing district and in the Wen-hua market of Ta-ch'i under the jurisdiction of the district, one frequently sees traces of the Miao people of the vicinity. Third, they go to more distant Chinese markets to buy and sell. But this is done at no set times; only when they lack some necessity do they go. The Miao live deep in the mountains; these Chinese markets are all equally distant. A few are several tens of li away but many are a hundred li away. Since the Miao all live a simple life in which few things are really needed, the occasions when they come out to a Chinese market to trade are rare, once or twice a month at the most.

172 cont./ They reared the
231 silkworms until the cocoons were formed, wound off the silk
[283] from the cocoons, reeled it, and made it into native thread
[291] and silk. They dyed the material and made it into women's clothes. Recently they have learned how to hatch the worms from eggs themselves.

[285] The number of Miao who keep bees is quite large. They weave dup, open bamboo baskets, plaster them with mud on the outside, and make three openings in the front (Illus. 39) for the bees to go in and come out. They are covered with old
[438] bamboo hats. The honey produced is mainly sold. The yellow
237 wax is used to burn in place of incense and candles when wor-
[782] shiping the spirits.

285 Crafts. — The most common handicraft industry among the Miao is the weaving of bamboo wares. Bamboo splints are used to make baskets, containers, back carriers, fish traps, mats, and hats. The manufacture of hats and back carriers
[291] shows fine workmanship. The bamboo hats are worn by men
[482] and women over the headband in place of umbrellas. The back carrier has two carrying rings. At the time of use these go over
[854] the shoulders, with the basket full of various articles on the back. Women going into the fields often place their babies in the carriers so they can be free to work as usual. In addition to the use of bamboo as a raw material in weaving things, there is
[513] also lampwick grass, which can be woven into bed matting.
[438] After meeting their own needs the surplus is also sold. The cloth
●286 woven by the women resembles that of the Chinese both in
[171] method and in design, and is also sold. Ninety-nine per cent
[439] of the Miao are farmers, there being very few artisans. Al-
463 though today a few have learned to do silversmithing, black-
[326] smithing, coppersmithing, or carpentry, ordinarily they are
[335] mainly engaged in agricultural pursuits, and the handicraft is only a side line and that is all.

439 Trade. — The Miao people do not know how to trade. Formerly, the Chinese brought salt and cloth into the Miao villages to exchange for their local products, but there were many dishonest traders, who cheated the Miao, giving rise to

/89 cont./

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Illus. 54. Personal adornment of women of She-te, Meng-tzu, Yunnan, (2), back view.

/Illus. 55-56 on pp. 90-91./

291 /92/ The materials used for Miao clothes consists of hemp
286 cloth, cotton cloth, and cheap local silk. Although they can
439 produce and weave it themselves, since the invasion of foreign cloth, hemp cloth is gradually disappearing from use. Native cloth is more durable than foreign cloth, but the output is limited and the cost is not low. Therefore, the market has gradually been taken over by foreign cloth. This is a general condition that exists in interior China and is not peculiar to the Miao area alone.

301 The personal adornment of the Hunan Miao today is alto-
[184] gether different from that of the Kweichow Miao and the Yunnan Miao. Even the personal adornment of the Hunan Miao as re-
301 corded in the Feng-huang T'ing Chih /Gazeteer of Feng-huang
175 Sub-prefecture/ during the Tao Kuang reign period /1821-1851/
[178] was very different from that today.

4:Mickey E-5 (1960-?)1967 AES Misc AES

from the straw of glutinous rice made sandals.

They raised hemp in their gardens, cut it, stripped, dried, and bleached the fibers, separated the strands, and from them made the two grades of thread — one for sewing and mending and one for weaving into cloth. They gathered and dried nutgalls and from them prepared a dye, by which they dyed white cloth bought in piece in the market an even, almost black blue. They made all the clothing for themselves and their families and their bedding. They wove the straw comforter, too. Girls and younger women made the embroidery on the overpiece, front apron, and turban scarf, and wove belts, while the older women made hemp thread and did the weaving of cloth for the back apron and bands for the baby pad. It was the older women who wove the straw comforter on a vertical loom.

Three types of loom were used. First there was that described in the making of the belt. Second, there was the vertical loom used for the weaving of straw comforters. This had two beams, one high and one near the floor, from which the warp ropes of twisted straw went back and forth. Two of the poles supporting the rafters served as uprights. The weft was similar to the warp, except that straw ends were left sticking out so that the result was smooth on one side and had a nap on the other. The weft was sent through by hand, in and out, over and under successive threads as in the weaving of a rug or carpet. The third was used for the weaving of hemp cloth and bands.

Set on the floor was a substantial frame of two by fours about eight feet long and three wide, with pieces to brace it along the sides and, a little lower down, across the ends, also one about two feet from one end. The upper pieces extended two feet beyond the frame at each end. Into this frame was set another, lighter one, going into the upper horizontal pieces at the back, but down into the bracing piece at the front. It had a horizontal brace about a foot above the main frame, across the front of this lighter frame.

In the back, just in front of the uprights of this second frame, a board was put across for the weaver to sit upon. At the front end the yarn beam rolled in slots in the frame and

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

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was held firm by projecting rods which rested on a board across the frame. From the yarn beam the warp proceeded across the horizontal bar of the lighter frame, through two heddles of the frame variety made of bamboo rods with hemp thread between them, which were suspended from a roller laid across the lighter frame or through holes pierced in it, by straw rope and vine tendrils. They were a little wider than the piece of cloth used in the back apron, and the threads were about a foot long. From the lower ends similar ropes led to the fronts of two pedals. Other ropes of the same kind led from the backs of the pedals to the horizontal brace at the back of the main frame. From the heddles the warp proceeded to a reed, also suspended from the lighter frame, thence to the cloth beam set in slots in uprights in the longitudinal brace of the main frame, its longitudinal pieces and projecting above. The cloth beam was then held firm by straw rope tied around it and the frame behind the upright on one side. There were laze-rods set in just behind the front board.

Shed and countershed were formed by depressing first one pedal and then the other. The weft was shot through by hand, wound on bamboo shuttles of the shape as shown in figure 11. The weft was beaten up with the reed. Most of the warp thread was rolled on the yarn beam, but some extended beyond and lay in a basket. The reed was made of two pieces of wood, between which could be set and fastened a removable frame like that of the heddles, but without eyes in the thread which stretched between. The weaver took hold of two vertical bars as she beat up the weft. The contrivance was suspended by ropes attached to those bars.

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Women also cooked the paste and beans and shaped the glutinous rice cakes, distilled rice wine, ground the beans and made bean curd, including that mixed with pig's blood at the lunar New Year. They helped cut tobacco in the fields, cutting the leaves from the stalk in such a way as to leave a piece of it for a hook by which they fastened it into a rope of straw made as they went. These ropes were festooned across the fronts of the houses to dry, after which it was ready to smoke in their long-stemmed pipes.

low stools, not more than four inches high, and 352
close at hand is an article of furniture which serves as a table, though it would be flattering to call it by that name. Arranged by the side of the walls are a grain bin, a cistern or tub in which the drinking water is kept, a contrivance which serves as a bed, a large iron pan for cooking and other purposes, and innumerable odds and ends which to you would appear useless but to the owner are valued family possessions. On rudely contrived shelves or in a roughly made cupboard are several earthenware or wooden basins with primitive chopsticks and spoons. You will notice the loom, which is 286
as primitive as that used in the days of the Biblical Pharaohs. It will interest you and you will wish to examine the framework, the warp beam, lease rods, shed stick, heddle-rod, cloth beam and unfinished fabric. Happily it is not a fixture and can be moved outside the house, so that the weary housewife can weave in the sun. For the most part the articles enumerated, together with bundles of clothes, form the whole household possessions of a Miao family. The tragedy of these mud huts 342
is not so much the poverty as the ugliness and the absence of cleanliness. The missionary often has to sleep in a house such as this, and when his bed has been set against the dividing wall, if this has been made of wattle as it frequently is, some animal will push his head through a hole in the partition to have a look at the stranger.

Miao salute one another with great cordiality, 576
men greeting men, and women, women, by rubbing

10: Graham E-5 (1921-?) 1954 AE5 Miao AE5

beds, and chairs. The stoves are generally, like those of the Chinese, of clay and stones or bricks, but sometimes one is seen that is merely a square hole in the ground, a continuation of a very ancient custom.

The principal tools and utensils, which are like those of the Chinese, are the plow, the curved sickle for cutting grass and wood, the hoe or pick, the ax or hatchet, the hammer, saw, knife, spoon, ladle, rice-steamer, loom, and the iron or cooking vessel.

The domestic animals are the horse, mule, donkey, water buffalo, cow, pig dog, cat, sheep, goat, chicken, duck, and goose.

The principal food is corn meal cooked like porridge, but those who are able to get it eat rice. This diet is supplemented by vegetables, meat, and wild fruit and berries found in the woods. The investigations by Dr. Gordon Agnew showed that many Ch'uan Miao suffer from malnutrition.

Women weave cloth on home-made wooden looms, and they generally do the cooking. Both men and women work in the fields, but only men do the plowing. Sewing and embroidery work are done by women and girls. Hunting is a popular pastime of men and boys, especially during the winter months when there is little farm work to do.

Formerly most of their clothing was made of hemp cloth, which was undyed and therefore white, woven on their looms by the women. This evidently explains why they were called "White Miao." Whether the Ch'uan Miao belong or have belonged to the White Miao group of southern Kweichow is a problem yet to be solved. Today much of their clothing is made of blue cotton cloth bought from the Chinese.

In former years the clothing of the Ch'uan Miao, both men and women, that was worn on festive occasions and often to markets was beautifully embroidered and colored. Some of the embroidery, such as that of the handkerchiefs, is like that of the Chinese peasant's cross-stitch embroidery, but most of it, and that which is finest and best, includes beautiful designs found widely among non-Chinese people in southern and central Asia, extending even into central Europe. The best skirts of the women are pleated and dyed in a manner resembling somewhat the batiks of Java. The Ch'uan Miao men no longer wear embroidered garments, and the women are imitating, to save time, the coarser of the Chinese embroideries. This is bringing about the loss of a fine and beautiful art.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The family is the social unit, and the Ch'uan Miao family closely resembles that of the Chinese. The oldest male is the head of the family, and all his descendants, except married daughters, and including wives of sons and grandsons, generally live together in the same house. After marriage the woman belongs to the family of her husband. All having the same name are regarded as belonging to the same larger family and are not allowed to intermarry. Filial piety is the cardinal virtue and is expressed in elaborate funeral and other ceremonies.

While the couvade is found among the Hua Miao neighbors to the south, no

[14 cont.]

241 mountain terrain with poor soil, in which they can grow only corn, buckwheat and mixed grains. They also rear cattle, [231] horses, pigs, and principally sheep. At Wei-ning and Ta-ting, where the territory is highly mountainous, the climate is cold, and the population is thin; it is unfit for raising crops but best fit for grazing. In the southeast the Miao-I areas are comparatively better and suitable for rice cultivation. Besides [283] agriculture they are also engaged in simple handicraft industries, [286] such as home spinning and weaving. The commercial centers 443 of the Miao-I in all areas are the village fairs held during the day for the bartering of goods. The fairs are located like a network in some convenient spots in the cities, on a vacant lot, or on the slope of a hill. They are named after certain cyclic animals such as chicken, dog, cow and so on. At the time of the fair men and women who come from all places number from several hundred to several thousand. At the fair everyday articles of household use are displayed in rows of adjoining straw sheds. A fair is a scene of activity and gaiety. The villages in 778 which the Miao-I live are often endowed with rich resources, but 314 their belief in the earth as the dwelling place of the dragon spirit 316 forbids them to exploit its wealth, such as felling the trees for 784 timber and digging the mines for minerals. Hence their occupations are limited and their culture is backward.

6. Conclusion

000 Having learned from the foregoing the actual conditions of the Miao-I societies in Kweichow, we can realize their precarious situation. Today, enemy hoofs have ravaged half of the country, while the Miao-I areas have risen in importance with the din of guns in our war of resistance. We cannot afford any longer to allow the Miao-I people, who are owners of their lands, to muddle through life in their primitive way of living. It is hoped that the government administration and leaders of the society will begin to pay attention to the Miao-I communities,

Miao AE 5, Shan-Thai ALS Muong AM 10

S M 291 286 177

The women are less quick to abandon the traditional material. However, evolution, no matter how slow, seems irresistible, and throughout all of Thanh Hoá as far as the Laotian frontier the long white or blue tunic with sleeves is now cut from foreign cloth. As the people come to live closer to the large markets, the decline in weaving becomes more apparent, and the blue tunic, which is often lined with white material, is purchased ready-made from the Annamese tailor. Even the turban and the jacket are made of the smooth, fine grained cloth which comes out of the factories shining with size. Already only half of the families in Điện Lư /240/ still carry on weaving. Women are more likely to retain skirts made of local material until such time as they have lost the art of colored embroidery and find the thinner cloth of the market more to their advantage. On the edge of the delta and in contact with the Annamese, the piece which the women abandon last is the "cạp quần," the band sewn to the body of the skirt and which is wrapped around the breasts (1). In eastern

1. Cf. above, /p. 99/.

Thạch Thành and the cantons of Tam Lọng (Tho Xuân) and Hạ Thư'ờ'ng (Như' Xuân), which are peopled by recent immigrants, many of the women no longer weave, but the greater part of them continue to wear the "cạp quần," which they purchase from the more remote Mư'ờ'ng and Thai of Quảng Tế (Thạch Thành), Lang Chánh and Như' Lăng (Như' Xuân). However, the Annamese "cai yếm" appears among those who have evolved furthest, at first timidly and added to the "cạp quần," and then as a permanent replacement for it.

S M 286 237

As for silk material, the Mư'ờ'ng and Thai weave comparatively little of it. Many families and even many villages do not engage in silk production, and far from exporting it, they buy a certain quantity of material, and even silk thread, each year from the Thai and Laotians of Hua Phan. These will be transformed in a few houses into the cloth with gleaming stripes which is reserved for ceremonial skirts. Their cloth, however, is not as beautiful as that of Sam Nư'a.

Mi 286

Whereas the Man women make all the articles of their original costume with imported material, the Mèo women still weave solid cloth on a loom analogous to the valley looms, but smaller in size. The cloth they make is not cotton, but hemp which they boil and bleach with lime and spin by hand (2).

2. Cf. Savina,(114), pp. 212-213.

[160 cont.]
415 The harvested crops are transported on horseback, but more
482 often on the backs of men...or women. For this purpose the "Méo"
[492] of both sexes have pack-baskets which they carry on their backs, fastened to their shoulders by two straps. (Photo 157, Plate 40; photo 107, Plate 39.) This method of carrying burdens applies
[854] also to the transport of small children, whom the "Méo" women place on their backs, enclosed in a sort of sack held at the shoulders by two suspenders. (Photos 103 and 419, Plate 39.) It is the same for the transport of water, which is done by means of large trunks of female bamboo, often fastened together in pairs, with the interior partitions punched through, except for the lowest one. (Photo 346, Plate 36.)

[161] Like the other groups, the "Méo" construct almost all
326 the objects they use. There are found among them blacksmiths who make the agricultural implements of iron (ploughs, harrows, billhooks, scythes), silversmiths for the jewelry in silver, copper, or iron.

Every "Méo" is more or less a basket maker, and in all of the
285 homes pack-baskets are made, of rattan or bamboo fiber, of which each member of the household possesses a specimen of a size corresponding to his strength.

[294] The clothing likewise is made at home. The hemp is harvested
248 in the bottoms of the cirques and the valleys, broken up and stripped with big wooden combs. It is then spun by hand by the women,
283 then wrapped about a frame with horizontal arms, pivoted on top of a tripod (photo 128, Plate 43), and finally it is wound on bobbins and
286 woven by means of primitive looms, very much like the looms which one finds in remote corners of France. (The house in the foreground on the left in photo 347, Plate 41, shows a portion of one of these
294 looms.) The garments are frequently made in white, with the raw
[386] linen thus obtained. The dyeing of the materials in indigo, red, or green, moreover, is carried out by the processes already indicated for the other groups. We already have mentioned that the "Méo"
[531] employ likewise the process of designing in wax described in connection with the "Man-tien."

241 eight ears. The stalks likewise are placed in piles in the fields, and then carried in as needed for bedding for the animals, heating, cooking food, or even building house walls.

The Meo grow little mountain rice and almost never plain's rice. The areas rarely lend themselves to the latter crop. However we have discovered, especially at Gi Chu Phin near Van Bu, magnificent mountain cirques whose slopes were decorated with terraced rice fields up to an altitude of one thousand meters.

Aside from hemp, buckwheat, and opium, other crops are planted in the furrows of the fields of maize and among the stalks of that plant. This is done in such a way that the same field may produce at the same time beans, peas, pumpkins, broad beans, cucumbers and a grain called cao lien which serves to make flour and the bread eaten on holidays.

When the maize has been harvested, a crop of buckwheat is sometimes sown in the soil.

249 248 Opium is sown in November, the poppy seeds being mixed with ashes to protect them from insects. The incisions are made in the plant in April or May, then once all of them have given up their opium, preparations are started for a crop of maize on the same soil.

Hemp is grown at the lowest spot in the cirques, because it requires very deep arable soil. It is sown in April and harvested in 245 July. Sorghum is sown and reaped at the same time as maize. Finally some peach, pear, apple, plum trees, etc., are almost always found around the cabin. Their fruit, although less well flavored than those of France, is still not to be scorned.

286 462 415 The Meo make their cloth themselves from the hemp which they harvest. Some of them forge their work tools, spades, ploughshares, pruning-hooks, hoes, etc., and buy crude iron which comes from Yunnan for this purpose. They make their ladles and buckets, furniture, sandals of bamboo fiber, pottery and, in short, all of their farming implements.

252 243 462 /140/ To grind maize they use a mill similar to the Coi xay of the Annamese, but larger. The movable mill-stone here is activate by a crank which is articulated with a system of horizontal spokes attached to a strong wooden bar. Three or four women operate this bar by drawing it towards them and away from the mill, and then by pushing it towards the mill. The picture afforded by this exercise is one of vigorous movement. The bodies of these strong daughters of the mountain bending, their return movement which shows a glowing

/317 cont./

A 415 For preparing the food, many kinds of carved wooden vessels and troughs of wood (Fig. 205) or bamboo (Fig. 206) are used. /Figs. 201-208 appear here./ /318/ Gourd dippers and bowls, wooden ladles, knives, rice baskets and other baskets, bamboo containers, and so on are not lacking anywhere.

A [312] The bamboo containers for fetching water (Fig. 207) are closed at the top and the bottom; the water is poured by means of a gourd dipper (Fig. 208) into a hole cut into the upper edge. In this way the water remains clean and cannot easily A [171] be spilled when carried. Many typical household and kitchen utensils are almost exactly like those of the Meau.

A 482 I did not see carrying frames among the Akha; they are replaced by carrying baskets with a shoulder board and forehead band (Fig. 374; see the chapter, "Handicrafts").

A 354 For lighting the house, iron lamps with oil as fuel, and also pine chips, are used. The household equipment is espe- [372] cially rich in artistically plaited articles, such as are described 285 in the chapter, "Handicrafts."

As was pointed out, the dwellings and granaries of the A Akha give the impression of being clean and well tended. 356 The floor of the dwelling and the platform are swept twice a [412] day with the grass brooms that are also common among the 171 Meau (Fig. 175), with which one simply sends the sweepings [23] under the house through the seams and cracks. The food remains, too, are thus conveyed directly to the pigs and chickens.

/319/

Chapter 15

Clothing and Ornaments

M 294 The Meau women are very skilled in sewing and embroidery and, with much taste for color combinations, make the attrac- M 291 tive and also practical clothing for men, women, and children. The clothing of the Meau is absolutely uniform in cut and differs [248] only in the diversity of the embroidery and appliquéd designs. [596] Every family plants the required hemp and cotton and weaves [286] its own cloth. The strips of fabric which are made into clothing [294]

/319 cont./

291 [286] [294] [386] [292] [439] [294] are about 37 centimeters wide, corresponding to the width of the weaving board. They are colored dark blue in the dye-trough found in every house (see the chapter, "Handicrafts"). The homemade, sturdy, and resistant material is often replaced, especially for the making of holiday attire, by dark-blue cotton cretonne, which is purchased from the Chinese traders, but does not have for long the durability of the home-produced hemp cloth. The sewing equipment, such as thread, needles, embroidery silk, red and other colored cretonne, always comes from the Chinese trader. In addition to the work [292] [556] [531] clothes, which are worn for years, every prosperous Meau has a holiday outfit, which, however, differs from this only in the elaborateness of the embroidery among the women and in the number of silver buttons among the men, as well as sometimes in the material. The clothing of children is exactly like that of the adults.

291 531 The women's clothing of the Meau (Ills. 60 and 61, as well as 69 and 70, and furthermore Colored Plate II)[1] consists of the blouse, skirt, apron, turban, and leggings. The blouse is made of dark-blue material (Colored Plate II, Nos. 4 and 6), has long narrow sleeves, and is open in front. The two parts are pulled over one another in front and are tied at the waist. The low neck, which permits the beginning of the breasts to be seen, is trimmed with strips of material of various colors. Similar strips of material border the back part of the blouse, which hangs down loosely. A slit separates it /320/ from the front part. The most striking feature of the blouse is the typical sailor collar (Ill. 66),[2] which has the shape of a rectangle. In the case of children and older women this collar is usually plain dark blue, like the blouse itself. Young girls and women, on the other hand, wear it with so many small cloth patches sewed on it that nothing is to be seen of the dark-blue background color (Colored Plate III, Nos. 1 and 3, also Colored Plate IV, No. 3).[3] Thus, on collar 1 of Colored Plate III red cretonne strips are sewed on, and these are embroidered with a central line of lilac silk. On the dark-blue stripe of uniform width thus produced, small white triangles are sewed. Collar pattern 1 of Colored Plate III is

1 [See cat 116, PP 448, 449, 512, 240 - ANALYST]
2 [" " " P 492 - " "]
3 [" " " PP 439, 563 - " "]

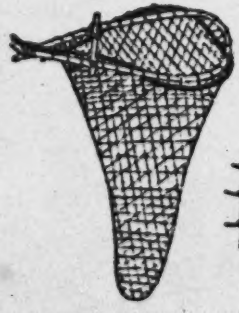
Miao AE5

/400 cont./

285 The mats of the Meau are plaited with rattan strips one to one and a half centimeters wide and always display the same plaiting pattern (Fig. 329). The type of plaiting is very tight and the edges are carefully finished, so /401/ that these mats show great durability. They are almost square and on the average 1.60X1.50 meters in size. They are used as an [513] [243] underlayer for sleeping and to spread the ears of rice on during the threshing, as well as for drying the threshed grain.

286 The Meau also produce nets, which are either knotted or crocheted, but not knitted (Figs. 347, 348, and 349). The [413] crochet needle is of wood and consists of a small hook with an attached handle about 20 centimeters long. It is called kǔń.

285 Abadie also mentions the skill of the Meau in the production of plaited work: "Every Meau is more or less a plaiter, [592] and the entire household makes carrying baskets of rattan fiber or bamboo. Every member of the family owns a piece in the size appropriate to his strength."

283 

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Figs. 347-349. Handnet of the Meau for Fishing, about 1/20 nat. size.

[227] [286] The knotted net is tied to a stick bent in the shape of a circle. Fig. 348, knots; Fig. 349, net meshes; 1/2 nat. size.

Furthermore the Meau make all the ropes, from the thinnest strings to thick ropes and hide ropes. To make thin strings three fibers of rattan or of the bast /Figs. 347-349 appear here/ of certain trees are twisted on the upper or lower leg (Ill. 64). 1/ Greater degrees of strength are obtained by adding three fibers each time, so that a thicker

1/ [See Cat 116, P470- ANALYST]

/401 cont./

283 string is produced from the thinner one. Heavy cord is obtained by twisting in rattan fibers by means of a wooden fork.
[237] The Meau twist strong ropes out of strips of skin, those of bearskin being regarded as the strongest.

/402/ In addition to the twisting process, braid-like ropes,
[492] bands and wide belts for the saddles of the pack animals are also plaited. For this purpose the Meau use three to twelve threads each time. This plaiting is done solely with the hands
[412] and without any tool; only in the making of straps are iron awls used for preliminary piercing.

• 286 The ancient Chinese literature (1) already mentions re-

1. North China Br., 1859, p. 264; Ch Hch'kfsch, Vol. II, Ch. 10, p. 38.

peatedly that the Meau are good spinners, weavers, and dyers. For the manufacture of the cloth for clothing, the Meau primarily use hemp, rarely cotton. They sow hemp (măn) in their
248 rice and poppy fields. Lajonquière (2) likewise mentions hemp

2. II, p. 311.

in Indochina and writes that the Meau there cultivate it at the same time as maize and harvest it six to seven months after the sowing. The fibers of banana leaves, on the other hand, were never used, according to my observations and findings. And
[114] since I could find nothing about this anywhere else, a mistake by Seidenfaden, who reported on it, must be assumed. Cotton is cultivated in special fields and is used in a fashion similar to that among the Akha (see pp. 441 f.).

The hemp seed is set out with the planting stick among the Meau in northern Thailand; the period of cultivation falls between the end of April and the beginning of May; the harvest is about three months later. The stalks are cut with the sickle,
[283] the leaves are removed, and then the stalks are placed in water so that they will rot. Afterward they are dried, and the woody

Miao AE5

/403 cont./

283 which are called kǒulǐ, but then sticks about as thick as a finger are stuck in the ground in two rows one to two meters apart, and the yarn is now wound between them in skeins ready for weaving.

286 The yarn thus prepared is woven on horizontal looms (Ill. 88)[1] into strips of material 37 centimeters wide (Ill. 89).[2]

The weaver's comb of the loom has either a frame made of two wooden sticks between which the thin, flexible cross-strips of bamboo are held and tied fast (Fig. 352), or the frame consists of bamboo tubes with iron bands (Fig. 353), into which /404/ the cross-sticks are inserted. The threads are then drawn between these narrow cross-sticks.

Besides these looms, the Meau also use weaving boards to make narrower bands.

Figs. 352-353. Weaver's Combs of the Meau.

Fig. 352, of wood with bamboo cross-strips; Fig. 353, of bamboo with iron cross-strips.

Concerning this work, we also have some reports by Lajonquière (1), which in part are confirmed by Abadie:

1. II, p. 309.

"The common spinning material is hemp. It is harvested in [248] the lowlands, wound on spools, and combed with coarse combs. [283] The women spin it by hand... They weave their own cloth [171] and dye it in the same manner as the Tho." Savina (2) describes [184]

2. II, p. 211.

the procedures in Indochina somewhat differently: "When the

1 [see col 116, p 621 - ANALYST]
2 [" " " p 622 - "]

/404 cont./

286 [184] [171] spinning is finished, they bleach the thread with lime and stretch it for weaving on primitive frames that are quite similar to those of the Thai and Chinese. It is believed that these frames are of Chinese origin. They make a coarse, wrinkled, and strong cloth, which they make soft and shiny by means of polished roller-stones."

[114] [171] [177] I must indeed oppose Savina's opinion that the looms of the Meau are similar to those of the Chinese or of the other mountain peoples mentioned by him or are even of Chinese origin. At any rate, this is not true for the Meau in northern Thailand!

386 [294] The strips of fabric produced on the looms are sewed together by the Meau to make their clothing, after which the dyeing process or the art of batik work (already mentioned by Yü Chuluan) commences. The dyestuff is obtained from a 249 386 leafy plant more than a meter high, not, however, indigo, that thrives near water in moist, swampy soil. The Meau plant the shoots in the same manner as they plant sugar cane. Since the plant is a perennial, it can be harvested year after year. The 386 cut, green plant is put in water for two nights and one day, then the plant parts are removed, slaked lime is added to the solution remaining, and it is stirred vigorously. Now four handfuls of this solution mixed with lime is added to a large trough of water, whereupon the dyeing can begin. This process is simple. The material is dipped into the water and carefully soaked completely. Then it is allowed to dry, is checked to see whether the desired blue shade /405/ has been obtained, and the process is repeated until the color is satisfactory.

386 531 [413] Much more art and skill is required to provide the material with batik patterns. For this a design in wax is put on the still undyed material by the women with a special instrument consisting of a wooden handle and a three-edged brass pen (Figs. 354 and 355), from the crevices of which the applied wax flows, and, to be sure, in such a way that the negative /Figs. 354-355 appear here/ of the pattern desired is drawn on with the wax. In doing this, the woman holds the

/425 cont./

439 These observations are especially interesting because I [114] found exactly the opposite among the Meau in northern Thailand: they produce their guns themselves, but have no [326] knowledge of pottery!

[323] The author continues his desctiption [184] of the trade: "Trade is restricted to a locality and limited to bartering for a few things that are not part of their subsistence, namely, to certain luxury items, such as ornaments, colored silk, and ribbons. We have already mentioned that they are now beginning to buy even fabrics of European origin. In the region of Lao-Chay, a sector of Than-Thuy, they carry on a [314] special trade in wood for the making of coffins. These are fossilized woods (usually the tree of life, note by Dr. B.) which were buried by earthquakes and which petrified, a property that makes them sought by the Chinese, who like to bury their dead in such wood. The /426/ Meau of this region dig up these [314] woods, cut them into thick planks, and drag these heavy loads through forests and gorges in order to sell them on the 'T'ou-se-meo' of Mung-Tung."

At another place (1), Lajonquière comes back to the

1. II, p. 309.

silk of foreign origin previously mentioned by him: "All [596] clothing is made exclusively within the family. They procure [294] from the outside only the colored silk for the embroideries and the colorful bands which fops are beginning to add to their attire... [286] The custom of buying cotton goods on the market or among the natives who produce it is spreading more and more, for the weaving of hemp is difficult and laborious." We find this observation, too, confirmed by Abadie (2).

2. Page 161.

39: Bernatzik--621 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947
AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/Between pp. 458 and 459/

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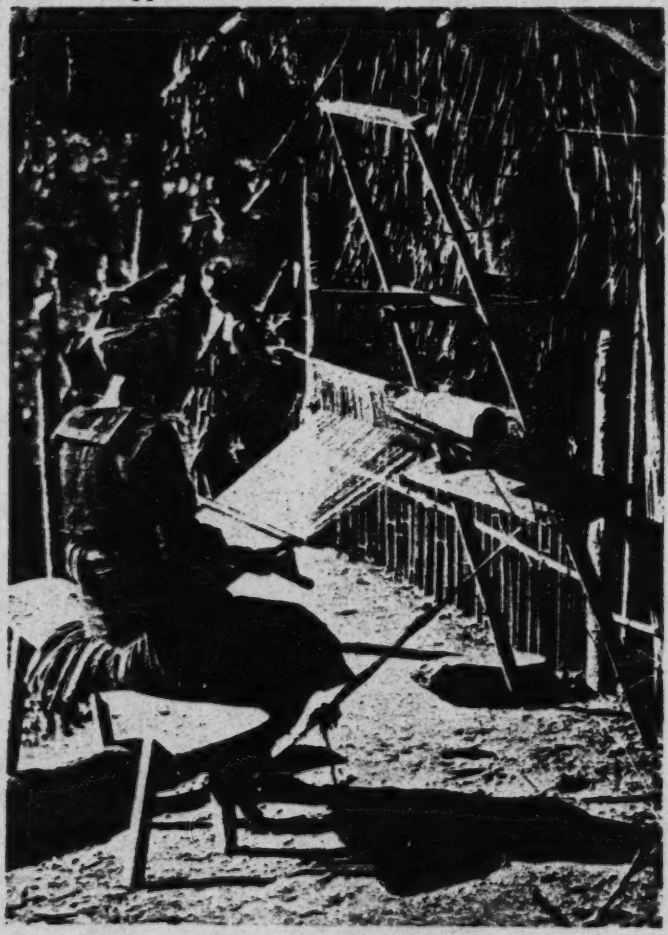

Ill. 88. Portable horizontal loom of the Meau, with foot device.

39: Bernatzik--622 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/Between pp. 458 and 459/

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Ill. 89. The woman weaver is preparing the woof.

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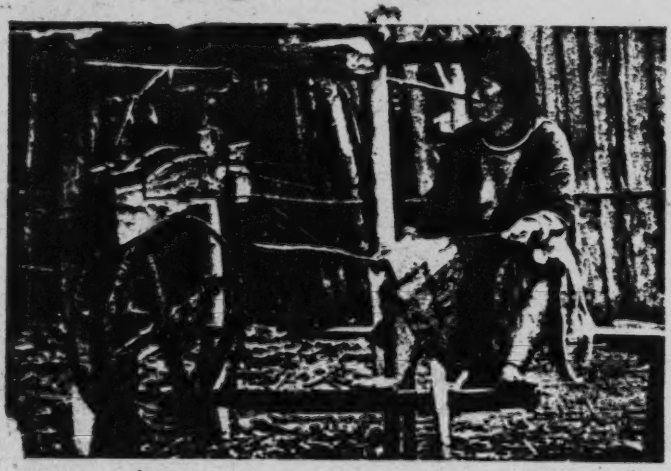

Ill. 90. With the help of this spinning machine the Meau woman is twisting four threads together.

/VIII cont./

286 Ill. 88. Weaving the spun material made from hemp. Portable horizontal loom with treadle device. The warp is stretched with the help of a belt around the loins. The woman at the loom is just about to strike home the sword (cf. Ill. 89).

Ill. 89. The weaver is making preparations for the woof. The shuttle is carved out of wood. The inserted bobbin, around which the hemp thread is wound, is made of bamboo. The stick that separates the two layers of thread is made out of the same material.

283 Ill. 90. Spinning machine. With its help, four threads, which the woman doing the spinning holds in her left hand, are twisted together. By means of the little stick in her right hand, she prevents the threads from becoming tangled. She turns the flywheel with both feet.

Ills. 91-96. The harvest.

262 [244] Ill. 91. The ripe squash at the edge of the fields of mountain rice are gathered. The juicy, tart meat of the raw fruit is especially tasty in the great heat.

243 Ill. 92. The stalks of the mountain rice are cut individually, with the help of the small crescent-shaped harvesting knife, about 30 centimeters below the ear and then bundled. The straw is left standing in the fields and rots.

Ill. 93. Bringing in the harvest. Each member of the family loads himself with as many bundles of ears in carriers and baskets as he can carry. Then there is a walk for hours over the narrow mountain paths to the village. [484] The men carry in their hands the crossbows with arrows in place ready to shoot.

/IX/

252 256 Ill. 94. Peculiar mills of the Meau. The lower-millstone half is fixed, the upper part is eccentrically attached to a horizontal pole. When the latter is swing back and forth, the movable-millstone half turns. A hole is chiseled in the top of it, through which the grain is poured in. According to whether the wooden axle which connects